Homosexuality
Homosexual Identity

vs

Homosexual Behaviour

• Putting sexual attraction at the core of our identity is a recent invention.

• From ancient times the adjective *homosexual* was used to describe acts that anyone could preform, not to an unchanging condition or an essential identity.

• It referred to a behaviour, not a category of a person.
Homosexual Identity vs Homosexual Behaviour

- Recent studies have found that sexual desire is more fluid than most people thought.
- They can be influenced by environment, culture and context.
- Monasteries, prisons,
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• Are people born homosexual (or with homosexual desires) or are they developed from their environment?

Answer: Yes.

Answer: No.
The Nature/Nurture Debate

Lady Gaga’s song - “Born This Way”

I'm beautiful in my way
'Cause God makes no mistakes
Don't be a drag, just be a queen
So we can rejoice your truth
A different lover is not a sin
No matter gay, straight, or bi
Lesbian, transgendered life

(No matter black, white, beige, Lebanese, Chola descent or Orient)
The Nature/Nurture Debate

Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project and America’s most prominent geneticist:

“Sexual orientation is genetically influenced but not hardwired by DNA, and that whatever genes are involved represent predispositions, not predeterminations.”
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• Neuroscience has shown that our brains can be rewired, to a certain extent, called neuroplasticity.

• For example, a *New York Times* article reported that “the part of the brain that deals with navigation is enlarged in London taxi drivers, as is the region dealing with the movement of the fingers of the left hand in right-handed violinists.”
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• We are embodied beings.
• Our thoughts and desires come from our brain, but our thoughts and desires also have the ability to build and rewire our brain.
• Science continues to prove the profound and mysterious fact that humans are mind-body unities.
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• So, like most things, homosexual desires are not an either/or when it comes to the nurture/nature debate.
• And while this is helpful in helping us understanding *scientifically* why some people feel as they do, science cannot answer the question of morality.
• Therefore, this is the wrong starting point in discussing questions of morality.
The Nature/Nurture Debate

Gay advocate John Corvino

“It doesn’t matter whether we’re born this way. The fact is that there are plenty of genetically influenced traits that are nevertheless undesirable.”
The Nature/Nurture Debate

- A predisposition to depression, alcoholism, or drug addiction, just as a predisposition to diabetes and heart disease may be genetic, as they run in families.

- But one’s environment and behaviour also affects one’s tendencies towards depression, alcoholism, or drug addiction, just as one’s environment and behaviour can effect one’s tendencies towards diabetes and heart disease.
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• But most people would agree that, in these cases, morality has nothing to do with nature or nurture.

• Certainly understanding their effects on us can help us deal/live/overcome them.

• But morally has to do with how we respond (our behaviour) towards our genetic heritage and/or our environmental influences.
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• So, in order to try and remove homosexuality from the realm of morality (choice) advocates have been pushing identity into the realm of body (like that of race) where we have no choice.

• We are born this way.
Personhood Theory

Mind/Person
(personal/autonomous self, Has legal and moral standing)

Body
(Scientific fact (truth), biologically human, Merely material; an expendable biological organism.)
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• Ironically, because body tends to “lock us in” and contradict the transgender philosophy, transgender identity tries pushes identity into the realm of (choice) mind.

• We are what we choose to be.
Personhood Theory

Mind/Person
(personal/autonomous self, Has legal and moral standing)

Body
(Scientific fact (truth), biologically human, Merely material; an expendable biological organism.)
The Nature/Nurture Debate

• For this reason there has been push back against the transgender movement by gays and lesbians.

• Despite LGBTQ+, the movement is not a united front.

• They are not all coming from a similar foundation and truth/right wrong ends up being whatever works for you.

• But can “whatever works for you” actually work for individuals and societies?
*Imagine an Anglo-Saxon warrior in Britain in AD 800 (or Aragorn from *Lord of the Rings*). He has two very strong inner impulses and feelings. One is aggression. He loves to smash and kill people when they show him disrespect. Living in a shame-and-honor culture with its warrior ethic, he will identify with that feeling. He will say to himself, “That’s me! That’s who I am! I will express that.” The other feeling he senses is same-sex attraction. To that he will say, “That is not me. I will control and suppress that impulse.”

*Now imagine a young man from Vancouver today. He has the same two inward impulses, both equally strong, both difficult to control. What will he say? He will look at his aggression and think, “This is not who I want to be, and will seek deliverance in therapy and anger-management programs. He will look at his sexual desire, however, and conclude, “That is who I am.”
Where does morality come from?

• Does our identity simply come from within?
• Are we merely biology?
• Are we merely products of our culture?
• Is there anything broken in creation? If so, how does that effect us?
• Is creation good or bad or neither?
• Are bodies reservoirs of meaning and morals or just a piece of matter?
• Are we an fluke of nature or designed by a Creator?
The Biblical View

• Placing sexual feelings and/or biology at the center of our identity is an extremely narrow way to understand one’s humanity.
• And speaks to a cultural identity crisis that has lost its spiritual way in knowing where to root its identity.
• The Bible offers a much more compelling story that defines our identity in terms of the image of God, created to reflect his character.
The Biblical View

• According to the Biblical story, we are designed by a good Creator as holistic beings (mind/body working together in harmony), and yet, because of rebellion (sin) towards our Creator we all experience varying levels of personal disharmony.

• In Christ, however, God came to redeem all (not part) of us and to bring us back to harmony with him, others and ourselves.
The Biblical View

- Creation
- Incarnation
- Resurrection
- Restoration
Personhood Theory

Mind/Person
  (personal/autonomous self, Has legal and moral standing)

Body
  (Scientific fact (truth), biologically human, Merely material; an expendable biological organism.)
The Biblical View

- We find the deepest fulfilment when we choose an identity that is congruent with our deepest convictions, living them out even when it is difficult or demanding.
- For many people, religious identity (or faith in Christ) is such an important part of their lives, it transcends everything else.
The Biblical View

• Therefore, the most reliable marker of who we are is our physically embodied, God given identity as male and female.

• Our sexual identity is meant to be in harmony with our psychological identity.

• The goal is to overcome self-alienation and recover a sense of inner coherence.
The Biblical View

• We do not choose our feelings, but we do choose our behaviour and identity.

• It doesn’t matter in the least whether someone is attracted to women or men in general.

• In many ways we are all on a sexual continuum.

• But it is not temptation, but how we respond to our temptations.
Christopher Yuan
“Out of the Far Country”

“I had always thought that the opposite of homosexuality was heterosexual. But actually, the opposite of homosexuality is holiness.”

• Everyone is called to choose holiness, whether attracted to the same sex or the opposite sex, whether married or single.
Responding as a Church

1. We must reject the extremes.
Responding as a Church

2. We must repent of our unbiblical attitudes and find ways to communicate to those who struggle with sin of any kind that they will find refuge in the church.
Responding as a Church

3. We must realize that not everything will be healed this side of eternity. (i.e. Paul’s “thorn in the flesh”).

4. We must aspire to be a community that welcomes the outcast and the marginalized.
Responding as a Church

5. We must teach that marriage is one kind of calling and that singleness is another equally valid calling.

6. We must support singles and create structures in which celibate singles can enjoy committed relationships and express nonsexual affection.
Responding as a Church

7. We must remember that we are not defending “traditional values”, but biblical and creational values.

8. We must recognize the separation between church and state and not mistake society with the kingdom of God.

In light of this, we must allow different Christians to navigate these two worlds according to their conscience.
Responding as a Church

9. We must become known as those who honor and speak up for the whole person, as people made in God’s image.
The reason we speak out on moral issues should not be because our beliefs are being threatened or because we feel offended. We should erase the word offended from our vocabulary. After all, Christians are called to share the offense of the cross. This is not about us.
We must make it clear that we are speaking out because we genuinely care about people. No matter how compelling the case for a biblical ethic, people rarely change their minds based on intellectual arguments alone. They are even less likely to change if all they hear is moral condemnation.
People are drawn in by vision that attracts them by offering a more appealing, more life affirming worldview. Christians must present biblical morality in a way that reveals the beauty of the biblical view of the human person so that people actually want it to be true. And they must back up their words with actions that treat people with genuine dignity and worth.

Love thy Body, p. 190